

How to Play Chess | Rules + 7 Steps to Begin



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Updated: Apr 25, 2019, 3:26 AM |

28 | [For Beginners](#)

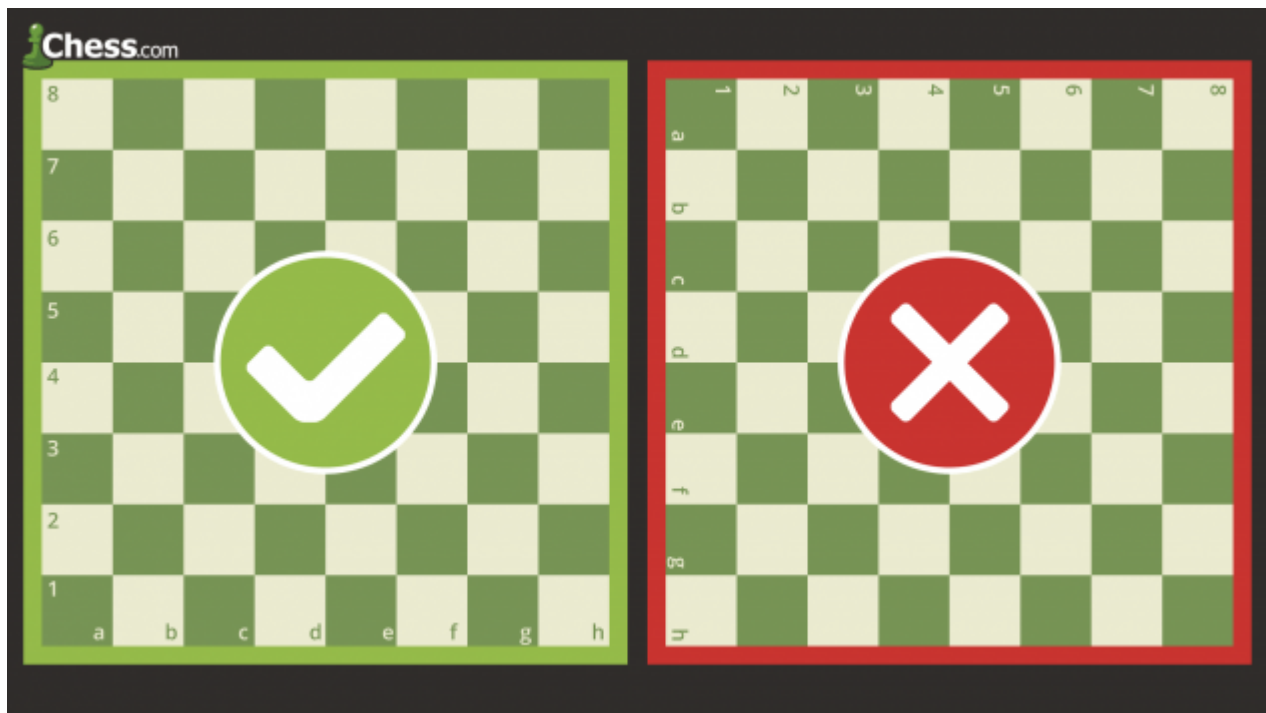
English

It's never too late to learn how to play chess - the most popular game in the world! Learning the rules of chess is easy:

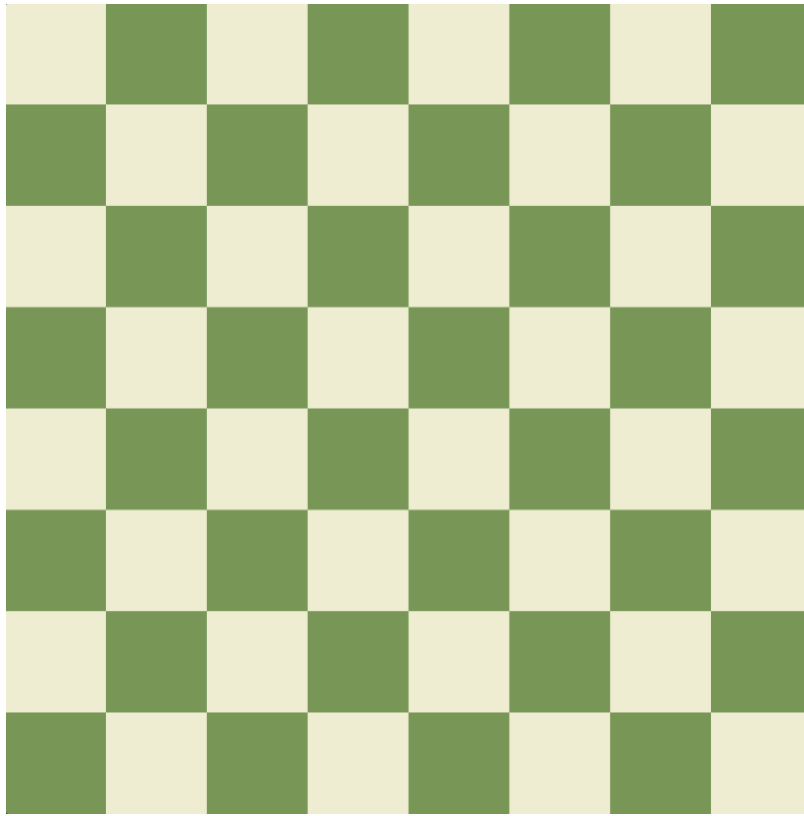
1. [Set up the Chess Board](#)
2. [Learn to move the Pieces](#)
3. [Discover the Special Rules](#)
4. [Learn who Makes the First Move](#)
5. [Check out the rules on How to Win](#)
6. [Study the Basic Strategies](#)
7. [Practice Playing Lots of Games](#)

Step 1. How to Setup the Chessboard

At the beginning of the game the [chessboard](#) is laid out so that each player has the white (or light) color square in the bottom right-hand side.



The chess pieces are then arranged the same way each time. The second row (or rank) is filled with pawns. The rooks go in the corners, then the knights next to them, followed by the bishops, and finally the queen, who always goes on her own matching color (white queen on white, black queen on black), and the king on the remaining square.



Set up the pieces at the beginning of the game will be really easy.



Recommended Tool -> [Train your vision of the board](#)

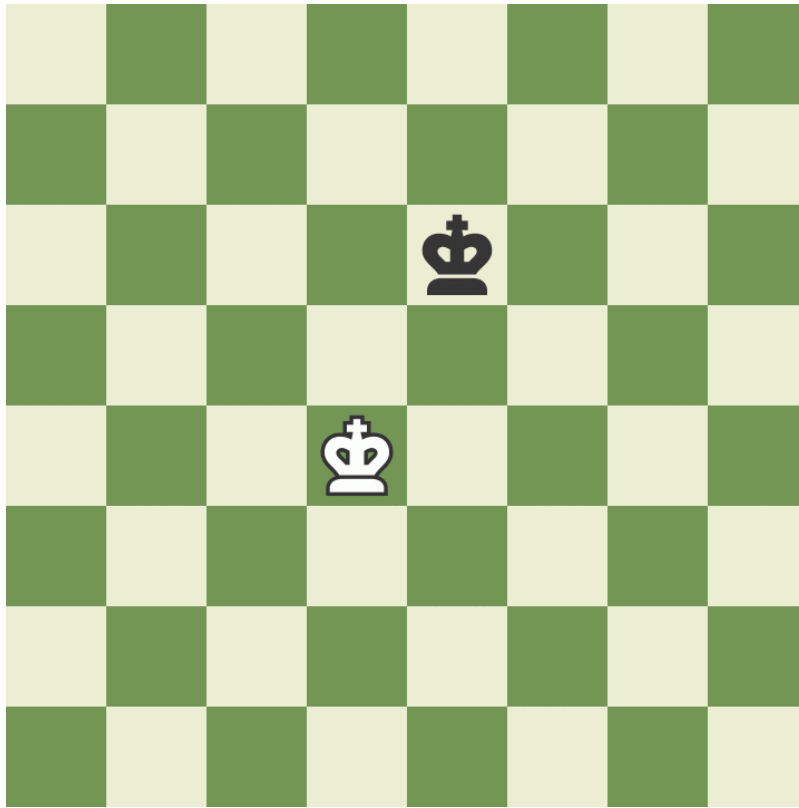
Step 2. How the Chess Pieces Move

Each of the 6 different kinds of pieces moves differently. Pieces cannot move through other pieces (though the knight can jump over other pieces), and can never move onto a square with one of their own pieces. However, they can be moved to take the place of an opponent's piece which is then captured. Pieces are generally moved into positions where they can capture other pieces (by landing on their square and then replacing them), defend their own pieces in case of capture, or control important squares in the game.

How to Move the King in Chess

The king is the most important piece, but is one of the weakest. The king can only move one square in any direction - up, down, to the sides, and diagonally.

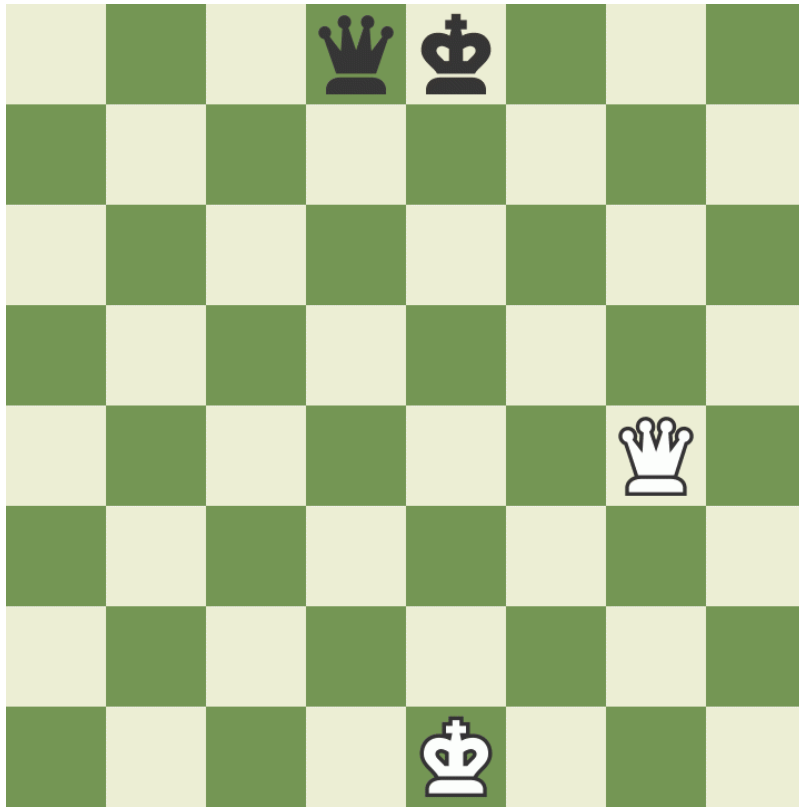
The king may never move himself into check (where he could be captured). When the king is attacked by another piece this is called "check".



How to Move the Queen in Chess

The queen is the most powerful piece. She can move in any one straight direction - forward, backward, sideways, or diagonally - as far as possible as long as she does not move through any of her own pieces.

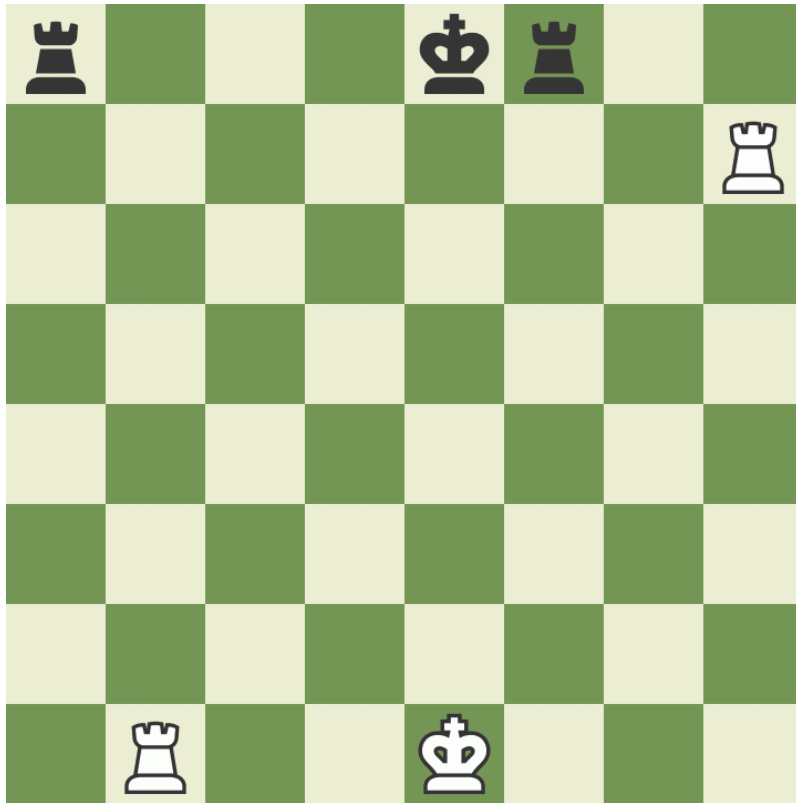
And, like with all pieces, if the queen captures an opponent's piece her move is over. Notice how the white queen captures the black queen and then the black king is forced to move.



How to Move the Rook in Chess

The rook may move as far as it wants, but only forward, backward, and to the sides.

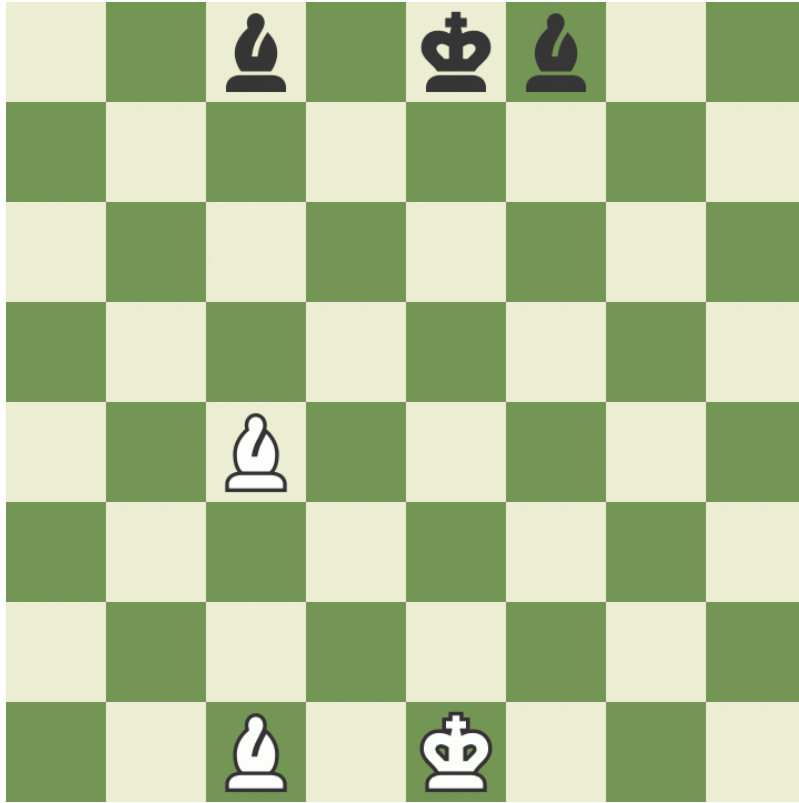
The rooks are particularly powerful pieces when they are protecting each other and working together!



How to Move the Bishop in Chess

The bishop may move as far as it wants, but only diagonally. Each bishop starts on one color (light or dark) and must always stay on that color.

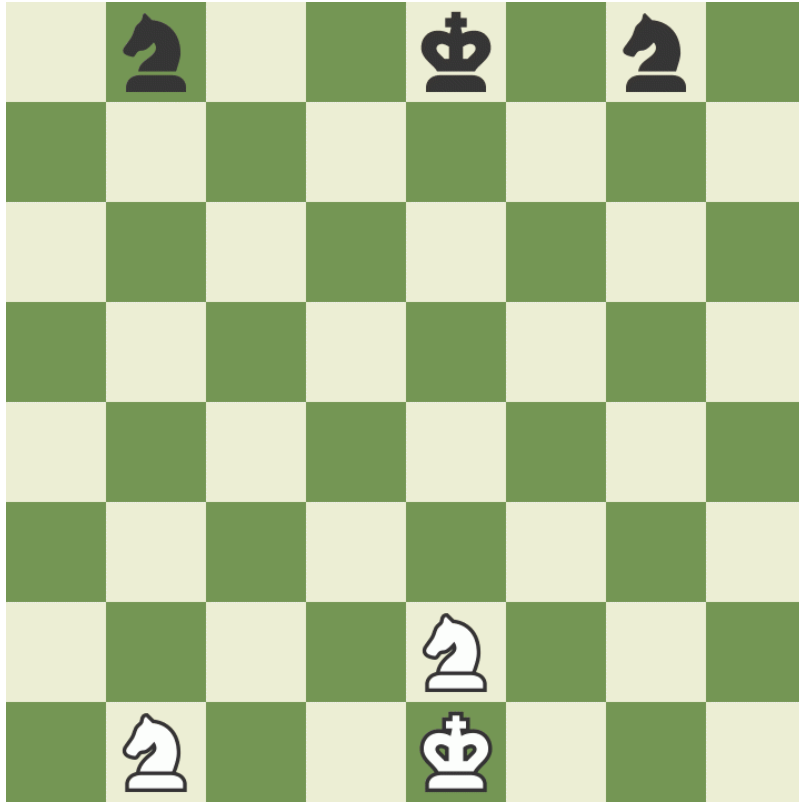
Bishops work well together because they cover up each other's weaknesses.



How to Move the Knight in Chess

Knights move in a very different way from the other pieces – going two squares in one direction, and then one more move at a 90 degree angle, just like the shape of an “L”.

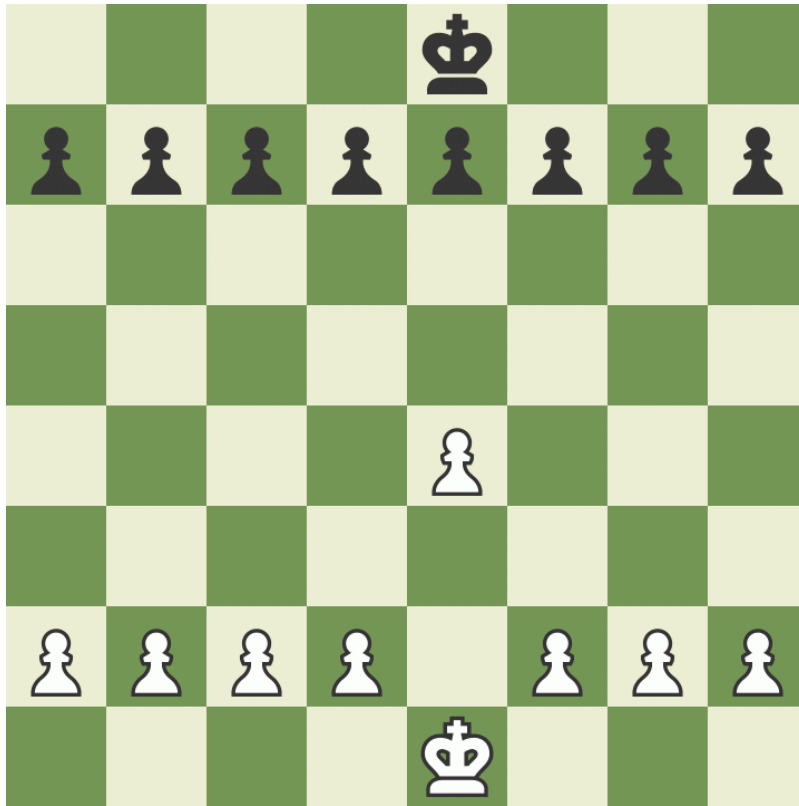
Knights are also the only pieces that can move over other pieces.



How to Move the Pawn in Chess

Pawns are unusual because they move and capture in different ways: they move forward, but capture diagonally. Pawns can only move forward one square at a time, except for their very first move where they can move forward two squares.

Pawns can only capture one square diagonally in front of them. They can never move or capture backwards. If there is another piece directly in front of a pawn he cannot move past or capture that piece.



🕒 **Recommended Tool** -> [Solitaire Chess \(capture all your pieces\)](#)

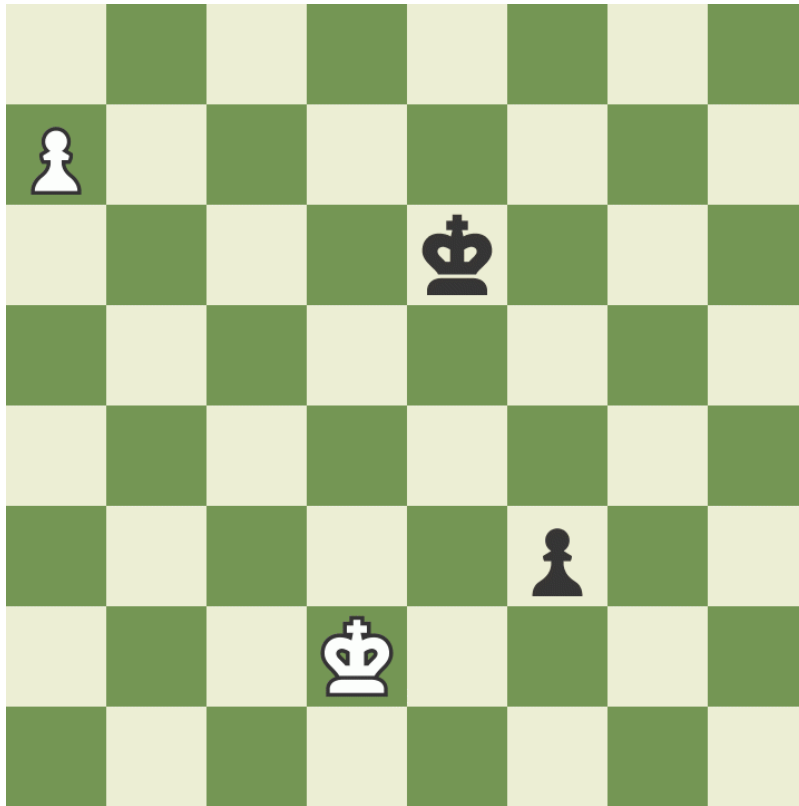
Step 3. Discover the Special Rules of Chess

There are a few special rules in chess that may not seem logical at first. They were created to make the game more fun and interesting.

How to Promote a Pawn in Chess

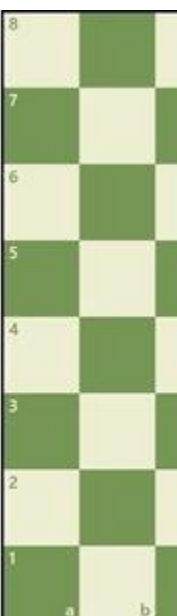
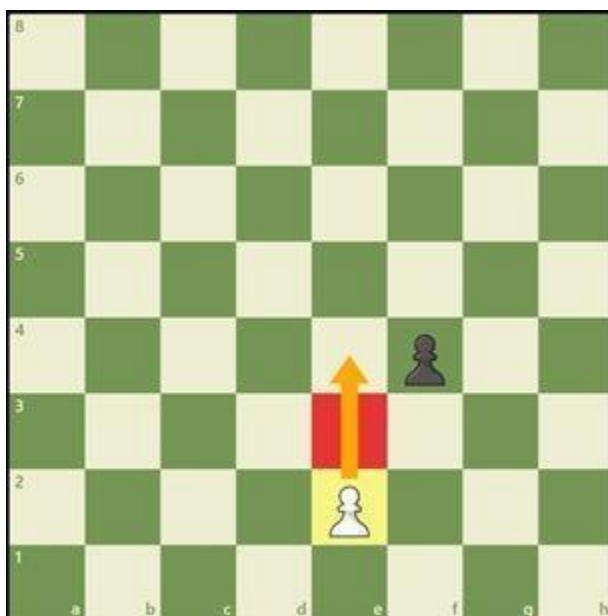
Pawns have another special ability and that is that if a pawn reaches the other side of the board it can become any other chess piece (called [promotion](#)).

A pawn may be promoted to any piece. A common misconception is that pawns may only be exchanged for a piece that has been captured. That is NOT true. A pawn is usually promoted to a queen. Only pawns may be promoted.



How to do "en passant" in Chess

The last rule about pawns is called "[en passant](#)," which is French for "in passing". If a pawn moves out two squares on its first move, and by doing so lands to the side of an opponent's pawn (effectively jumping past the other pawn's ability to capture it), that other pawn has the option of capturing the first pawn as it passes by.



This special move must be done immediately after the first pawn has moved past, otherwise the option to capture it is no longer available. Click through the example below to better understand this odd, but important rule.

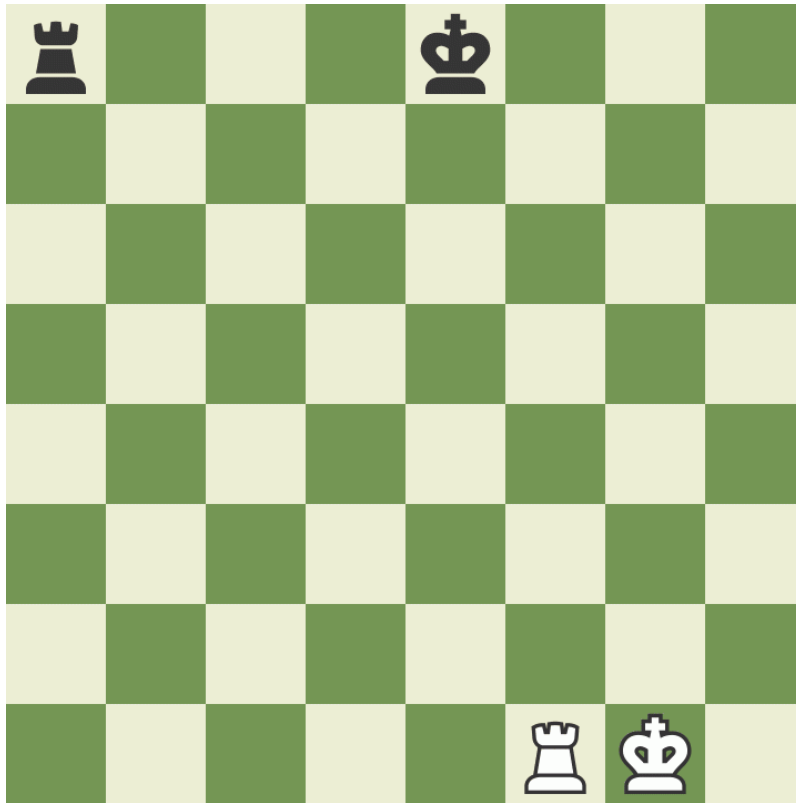


How to Castle in Chess

One other special chess rule is called [castling](#). This move allows you to do two important things all in one move: get your king to safety (hopefully), and get your rook out of the corner and into the game. On a player's turn he may move his king two squares over to one side and then move the rook from that side's corner to right next to the king on the opposite side. (See the example below.) However, in order to castle, the following conditions must be met:

- it must be that king's very first move
- it must be that rook's very first move
- there cannot be any pieces between the king and rook to move
- the king may not be in check or pass through check

Notice that when you castle one direction the king is closer to the side of the board. That is called castling "**kingside**". Castling to the other side, through where the queen sat, is called castling "**queenside**". Regardless of which side, the king always moves only two squares when castling.



Step 4. Find out Who Makes the First Move in Chess

The player with the white pieces always moves first. Therefore, players generally decide who will get to be white by chance or luck such as flipping a coin or having one player guess the color of the hidden pawn in the other player's hand. White then makes a move, followed by black, then white again, then black and so on until the end of the game. Being able to move first is a tiny advantage which gives the white player an opportunity to attack right away.

Step 5. Review the Rules of How to Win a Game of Chess

There are several ways to end a game of chess: by checkmate, with a draw, by resignation, by forfeit on time...

How to Checkmate in Chess

The purpose of the game is to checkmate the opponent's king. This happens when the king is put into check and cannot get out of check.

There are only three ways a king can get out of check:

- move out of the way (though he cannot castle!)
- block the check with another piece or
- capture the piece threatening the king.

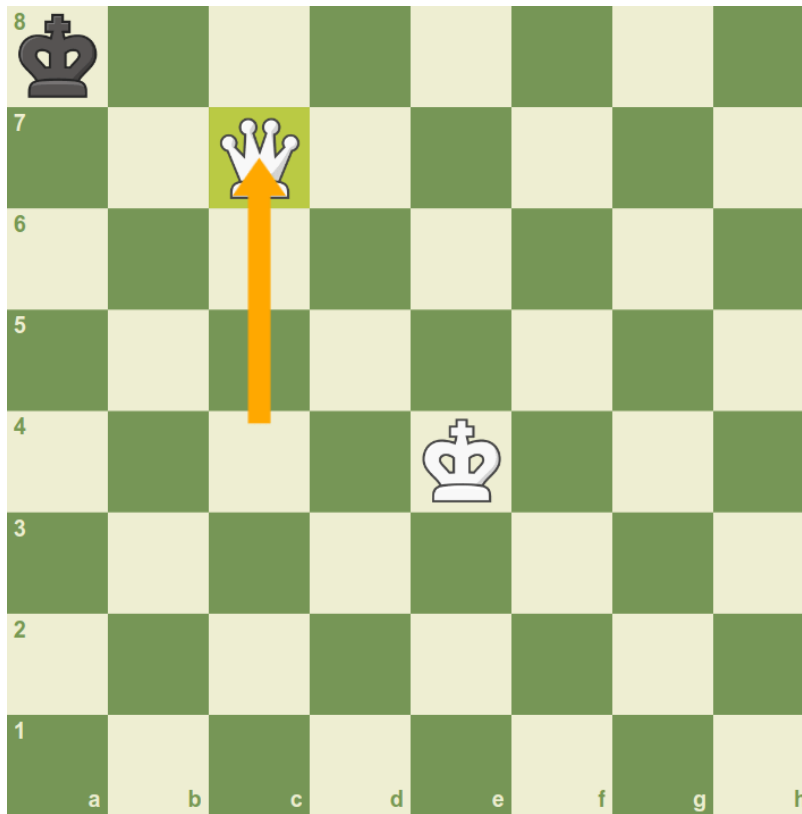
If a king cannot escape checkmate then the game is over. Customarily the king is not captured or removed from the board, the game is simply declared over.

The checkmate can happen in early stages in the game if one of the players does not act carefully. Below, you will find an example of the [Fools mate](#), a checkmate that happens in just 2 moves.

How to Draw a Chess Game

Occasionally chess games do not end with a winner, but with a draw. There are 5 reasons why a chess game may end in a draw:

- The position reaches a [stalemate](#) where it is one player's turn to move, but his king is NOT in check and yet he does not have another legal move:



With the move Qc7, black is not threatened and can't move. The game is declared draw by stalemate.

- The players may simply agree to a draw and stop playing
- There are not enough pieces on the board to force a checkmate (example: a king and a bishop vs. a king)
- A player declares a draw if the same exact position is repeated three times (though not necessarily three times in a row)
- Fifty consecutive moves have been played where neither player has moved a pawn or captured a piece

Step 6. Study Basic Chess Strategies

There are four simple things that every chess player should know:

Protect your King

Get your king to the corner of the board where he is usually safer. Don't put off castling. You should usually castle as quickly as possible. Remember, it doesn't matter how close you are to checkmating your opponent if your own king is checkmated first!

Don't Give Pieces Away

Don't carelessly lose your pieces! Each piece is valuable and you can't win a game without pieces to checkmate. There is an easy system that most players use to keep track of the relative value of each chess piece. How much are the chess pieces worth?

- A pawn is worth 1
- A knight is worth 3
- A bishop is worth 3
- A rook is worth 5
- A queen is worth 9
- The king is infinitely valuable

At the end of the game these points don't mean anything – it is simply a system you can use to make decisions while playing, helping you know when to capture, exchange, or make other moves.



Control the Center of the Chessboard

You should try and control the center of the board with your pieces and pawns. If you control the center, you will have more room to move your pieces and will make it harder for your opponent to find good squares for his pieces. In the example above white makes good moves to control the center while black plays bad moves.

Use All of your Chess Pieces

In the example above white got all of his pieces in the game! Your pieces don't do any good when they are sitting back on the first row. Try and develop all of your pieces so that you have more to use when you attack the king. Using one or two pieces to attack will not work against any decent opponent.

 **Lectura Recomendada** -> [10 Common Mistakes Among Beginners](#)

Step 7. Practice by Playing Lots of Games

The most important thing you can do to get better at chess is to play lots of chess! It doesn't matter if you play at home with friends or family, or play online, you have to play the game a lot to improve. These days it's easy to find a game of chess online!


How to Play Chess Variants

While most people play standard chess rules, some people like to play chess with changes to the rules. These are called "chess variants". Each variant has its own rules:

- **Chess960:** In Chess960 (Fischer Random), the initial position of the pieces is set at random. Pawns keep their normal initial position but the rest of the pieces are arranged randomly.
- **King Of The Hill:** In this format, the goal is to get your king to the center of the board or "top of the hill."
- **Bughouse:** This format is played in pairs. When one player captures a piece from the opponent, this piece will become available to his or her teammate. For example: If I play as White and my teammate, who is Black, takes a white knight from her opponent, in my turn I will have a knight that I can put on any free square on my board. I can do so in any of my future turns.
- **Crazyhouse:** This is a very exciting format, since it allows you to use the pieces you take from your opponent. That is, if I play as White and I take a black pawn from my opponent, that pawn will turn into a white pawn that I can put on the board as part of my army. I can do so in any of my future turns.
- **3-Check:** In this format, the first player who checks the opponent's king three times, wins.

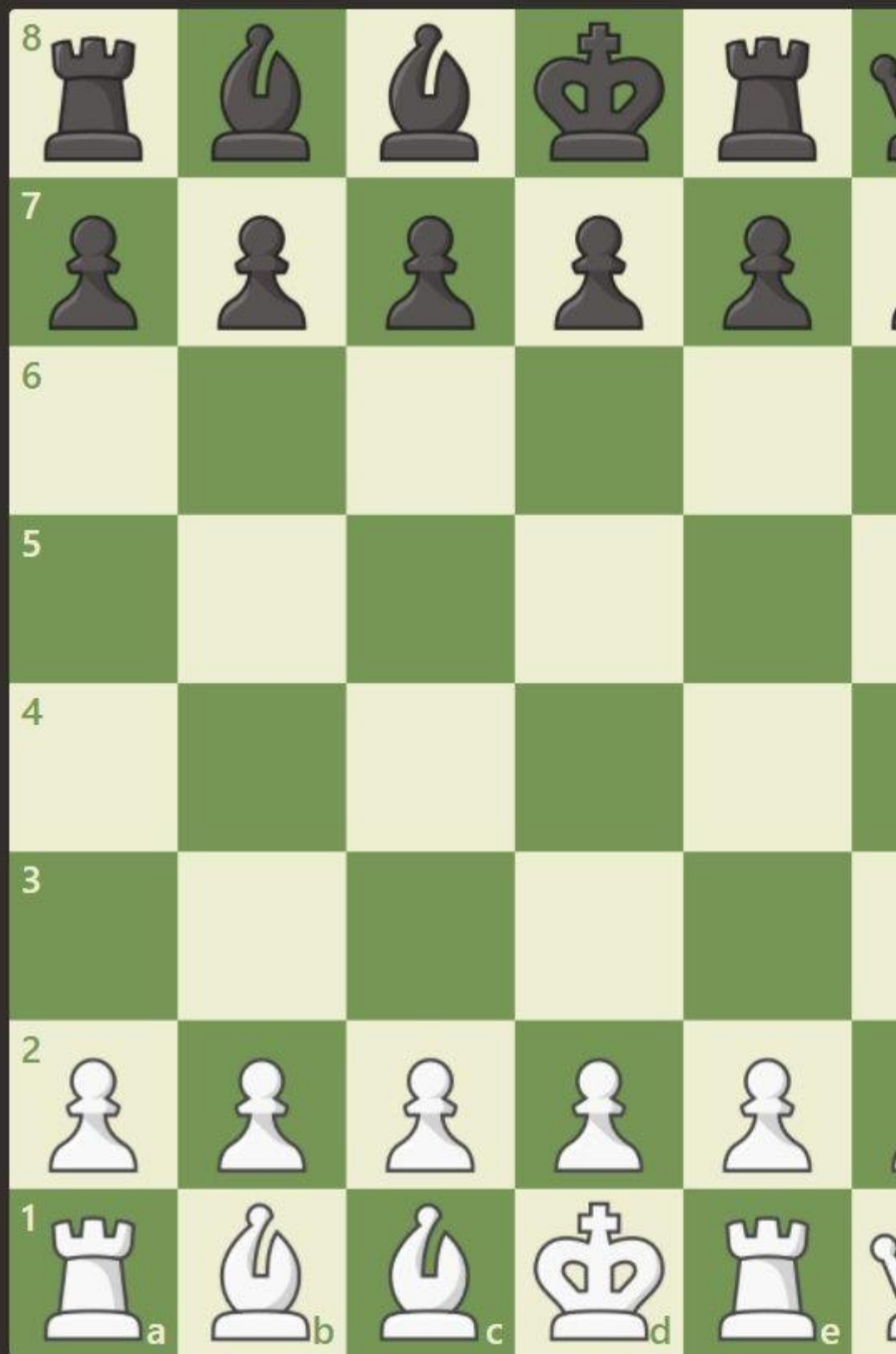


Enjoy chess with these amazing chess variants.

 **Recommended Article** -> [5 Amazing Chess Variants](#)

How to Play Chess960

[Chess960](#) follows all the rules of standard chess, except for the starting position of pieces on the back rank, which are placed randomly in one of 960 possible positions. Castling is done just like in standard chess, with the King and Rook landing on their normal castled squares (g1 and f1, or c1 and d1). 960 plays just like standard chess, but with more variety in the opening.



 **Recommended Tool** -> [Play Chess960 vs the Computer](#)

 **Recommended Tool** -> [Play Chess960 with Friends](#)

How to Play with Chess Tournament Rules

Many tournaments follow a set of common, similar rules. These rules do not necessarily apply to play at home or online, but you may want to practice with them anyway.

- **Touch-move** - If a player touches one of their own pieces they must move that piece as long as it is a legal move. If a player touches an opponent's piece, they must capture that piece. A player who wishes to touch a piece only to adjust it on the board must first announce the intention, usually by saying "adjust".
 - **Clocks and Timers** - Most tournaments use timers to regulate the time spent on each game, not on each move. Each player gets the same amount of time to use for their entire game and can decide how to spend that time. Once a player makes a move they then touch a button or hit a lever to start the opponent's clock. If a player runs out of time and the opponent calls the time, then the player who ran out of time loses the game (unless the opponent does not have enough pieces to checkmate, in which case it is a draw).
-

Frequently Asked Chess Questions (FAQs)


Maybe all this information can overwhelm you a little bit. That is why we put at your disposal these frequent questions that usually occur in those people who are beginning to enter the world of chess. We hope they're useful to you!



How do I get better at chess?

Knowing the rules and basic strategies is only the beginning - there is so much to learn in chess that you can never learn it all in a lifetime! To improve you need to do three things:

1. **Play lots of chess** — Just keep playing! Play as much as possible. You should learn from each game – those you win and those you lose.
2. **Study with chess lessons** — If you really want to improve quickly then you should do some online chess lessons. You can find online chess lessons [here](#).
3. **Have fun** — Don't get discouraged if you don't win all of your games right away. Everyone loses – even world champions. As long as you continue to have fun and learn from the games you lose then you can enjoy chess forever!

 **Recommended Article** -> [7 Tips to Get Better at Chess](#)

What is the best first move in chess?

While there is no one agreed-upon best move in chess, it's important to try to control the center right away. This usually results in most players playing one of their central pawns (in front of king or queen) forward two squares with either 1. d4 or 1. e4. Some other players prefer 1. c4 or 1. Nf3. Most other moves are not as good. Bobby Fischer believed that moving the king-pawn 1. e4 was best.

Which color starts in chess?

The player with the white pieces always moves first.

Can a pawn move backwards?

Pawns cannot move backwards. However, when a pawn gets to the other side of the board you must promote it to another piece (such as a queen). Then it moves just like that piece, and can move backwards.

Can you move more than one piece at a time in chess?

You can only move one chess piece at a time when it is your turn to move - with one exception! When you castle, you move both the king and the rook in one move.

Which is the most important chess piece?

The king is the most important chess piece. If you lose the king, you lose the game. But the queen is the most powerful chess piece.

When was chess invented?

The [origins of chess](#) are not exactly clear, though most believe it evolved from earlier chess-like games played in India almost two thousand years ago. The game of chess we know today has been around since the 15th century where it became popular in Europe.

 **Recommended Article** -> [The 10 Most Important Moments in Chess History](#)

What was the longest game in chess history?

The longest tournament chess game (in terms of moves) ever to be played was Nikolić vs. Arsović in 1989 and played in Belgrade, Serbia.

Ivan Nikolic vs. Goran Arsovic

1/2-1/2 17 Feb 1989 ECO: E95

8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1

a
b
c
d
e
f

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nf3 O-O 6. Be2 Nbd7 7. O-O e5 8. Re1 Re8 9. Bf1 h6 10. d5 Nh7 11. Rb1 f5 12. Nd2 f4 13. b4 g5 14. Nb3 Bf8 15. Be2 Ndf6 16. c5 g4 17. cxd6 cxd6 18. a3 Ng5 19. Bf1 Re7 20. Qd3 Rg7 21. Kh1 Qe8 22. Nd2 g3 23. fxg3 fxg3 24. Qxg3 Nh3 25. Qf3 Qg6 26. Nc4 Bd7 27. Bd3 Ng5 28. Bxg5 Qxg5 29. Ne3 Re8 30. Ne2 Be7 31. Rbd1 Rf8 32. Nf5 Ng4 33. Neg3 h5 34. Kg1 h4 35. Qxg4 Qxg4 36. Nh6+ Kh7 37. Nxc4 hxc4 38. Ne3 gxh2+ 39. Kxh2 Rh8 40. Rh1 Kg6+ 41. Kg1 Rc8 42. Be2 Rc3 43. Rd3 Rc1+ 44. Nf1 Bd8 45. Rh8 Bb6+ 46. Kh2 Rh7+ 47. Rxh7 Kxh7 48. Nd2 Bg1+ 49. Kh1 Bd4+ 50. Nf1 Bg4 51. Bxg4 Rxf1+ 52. Kh2 Bg1+ 53. Kh3 Re1 54. Bf5+ Kh6 55. Kg4 Re3 56. Rd1 Bh2 57. Rh1 Rg3+ 58. Kh4 Rxg2 59. Kh3 Rg3+ 60. Kxh2 Rxa3 61. Rg1 Ra6 62. Rg6+ Kh5 63. Kg3 Rb6 64. Rg7 Rxb4 65. Bc8 a5 66. Bxb7 a4 67. Bc6 a3 68. Ra7 Rb3+ 69. Kf2 Kg5 70. Ke2 Kf4 71. Ra4 Rh3 72. Kd2 a2 73. Bb5 Rh1 74. Rxa2 Rh2+ 75. Be2 Kxe4 76. Ra5 Kd4 77. Ke1 Rh1+ 78. Kf2 Rc1 79. Bg4 Rc2+ 80. Ke1 e4 81. Be6 Ke5 82. Bg8 Rc8 83. Bf7 Rc7 84. Be6 Rc2 85. Ra8 Rb2 86. Ra6 Rg2 87. Kd1 Rb2 88. Ra5 Rg2 89. Bd7 Rh2 90. Bc6 Kf4 91. Ra8 e3 92. Re8 Kf3 93. Rf8+ Ke4 94. Rf6 Kd3 95. Bb5+ Kd4 96. Rf5 Rh1+ 97. Ke2 Rh2+ 98. Kd1 Rh1+ 99. Kc2 Rh2+ 100. Kc1 Rh1+ 101. Kc2 Rh2+ 102. Kd1 Rh1+ 103. Ke2 Rh2+ 104. Kf1 Rb2 105. Be2 Ke4 106. Rh5 Rb1+ 107. Kg2 Rb2 108. Rh4+ Kxd5 109. Kf3 Kc5 110. Kxe3 Rb3+ 111. Bd3 d5 112. Rh8 Ra3 113. Re8 Kd6 114. Kd4 Ra4+ 115. Kc3 Ra3+ 116. Kd4 Ra4+ 117. Ke3 Ra3 118. Rh8 Ke5 119. Rh5+ Kd6 120. Rg5 Rb3 121. Kd2 Rb8 122. Bf1 Re8 123. Kd3 Re5 124. Rg8 Rh5 125. Bg2 Kc5 126. Rf8 Rh6 127. Bf3 Rd6 128. Re8 Rc6 129. Ra8 Rb6 130. Rd8 Rd6 131. Rf8 Ra6 132. Rf5 Rd6 133. Kc3 Rd8 134. Rg5 Rd6 135. Rh5 Rd8 136. Rf5 Rd6 137. Rf8 Ra6 138. Re8 Rc6 139. Ra8 Rb6 140. Ra5+ Rb5 141. Ra1 Rb8 142. Rd1 Rd8 143. Rd2 Rd7 144. Bg2 Rd8 145. Kd3 Ra8 146. Ke3 Re8+ 147. Kd3 Ra8 148. Kc3 Rd8 149. Bf3 Rd7 150. Kd3 Ra7 151. Bg2 Ra8 152. Rc2+ Kd6 153. Rc3 Ra2 154. Bf3 Ra8 155. Rb3 Ra5 156. Ke3 Ke5 157. Rd3 Rb5 158. Kd2 Rc5 159. Bg2 Ra5 160. Bf3 Rc5 161. Bd1 Rc8 162. Bb3 Rc5 163. Rh3 Kf4 164. Kd3 Ke5 165. Rh5+ Kf4 166. Kd4 Rb5 167. Bxd5 Rb4+ 168. Bc4 Ra4 169. Rh7 Kg5 170. Rf7 Kg6 171. Rf1 Kg5 172. Kc5 Ra5+ 173. Kc6 Ra4 174. Bd5 Rf4 175. Re1 Rf6+ 176. Kc5 Rf5 177. Kd4 Kf6 178. Re6+ Kg5 179. Be4 Rf6 180. Re8 Kf4 181. Rh8 Rd6+ 182. Bd5 Rf6 183. Rh1 Kf5 184. Be4+ Ke6 185. Ra1 Kd6 186. Ra5 Re6 187. Bf5 Re1 188. Ra6+ Ke7 189. Be4 Rc1 190. Ke5 Rc5+ 191. Bd5 Rc7 192. Rg6 Rd7 193. Rh6 Kd8 194. Be6 Rd2 195. Rh7 Ke8 196. Kf6 Kd8 197. Ke5 Rd1 198. Bd5 Ke8 199. Kd6 Kf8 200. Rf7+ Ke8 201. Rg7 Rf1 202. Rg8+ Rf8 203. Rg7 Rf6+ 204. Be6 Rf2 205. Bd5 Rf6+ 206. Ke5 Rf1 207. Kd6 Rf6+ 208. Be6 Rf2 209. Ra7 Kf8 210. Rc7 Rd2+ 211. Ke5 Ke8 212. Kf6 Rf2+ 213. Bf5 Rd2 214. Rc1 Rd6+ 215. Be6 Rd2 216. Rh1 Kd8 217. Rh7 Rd1 218. Rg7 Rd2 219. Rg8+ Kc7 220. Rc8+ Kb6 221. Ke5 Kb7 222. Rc3 Kb6 223. Bd5 Rh2 224. Kd6 Rh6+ 225. Be6 Rh5 226. Ra3 Ra5 227. Rg3 Rh5 228. Rg2 Ka5 229. Rg3 Kb6 230. Rg4 Rb5 231. Bd5 Rc5 232. Rg8 Rc2 233. Rb8+ Ka5 234. Bb3 Rc3 235. Kd5 Rc7 236. Kd4 Rd7+ 237. Bd5 Re7 238. Rb2 Re8 239. Rb7 Ka6 240. Rb1 Ka5 241. Bc4 Rd8

+ 242. **Kc3 Rh8** 243. **Rb5+ Ka4** 244. **Rb6 Rh3+** 245. **Bd3 Rh5** 246. **Re6 Rg5** 247. **Rh6 Rc5+** 248. **Bc4 Rg5** 249. **Ra6+ Ra5** 250. **Rh6 Rg5** 251. **Rh4 Ka5** 252. **Rh2 Rg3+** 253. **Kd4 Rg5** 254. **Bd5 Ka4** 255. **Kc5 Rg3** 256. **Ra2+ Ra3** 257. **Rb2 Rg3** 258. **Rh2 Rc3+** 259. **Bc4 Rg3** 260. **Rb2 Rg5+** 261. **Bd5 Rg3** 262. **Rh2 Rc3+** 263. **Bc4 Rg3** 264. **Rh8 Ka3** 265. **Ra8+ Kb2** 266. **Ra2+ Kb1** 267. **Rf2 Kc1** 268. **Kd4 Kd1** 269. **Bd3 Rg7 1/2-1/2**

 [The Longest Chess Games in History \(article\)](#)

What is chess notation?

Notation was invented so that we could analyze chess games after playing them. Thanks to it, we can register the whole game in writing and reproduce it as many times as we want. We must only write down our moves and our opponent's moves correctly.



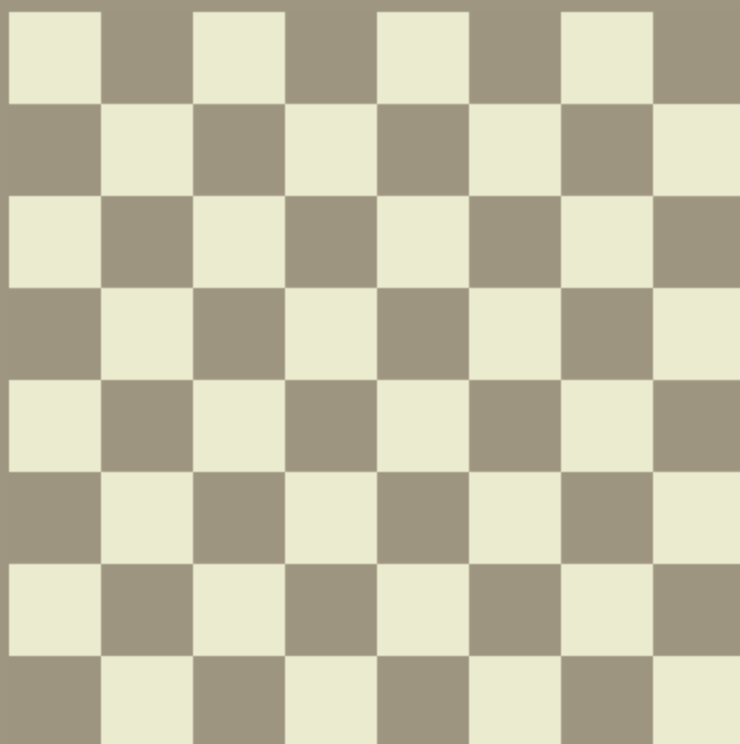
Chess notation will allow you to store all your games...

Each square has a coordinate and each piece is represented by an initial (N for knight, B for bishop, Q for queen, R for rook, and K for king).

 **Recommended Article ->** [Chess Notation - The Language of The Game](#)

What is the goal of chess?

Chess is a game played between two opponents on opposite sides of a board containing 64 squares of alternating colors. Each player has 16 pieces: 1 king, 1 queen, 2 rooks, 2 bishops, 2 knights, and 8 pawns.



x1

The goal of the game is to checkmate the other king. Checkmate happens when the king is in a position to be captured (in check) and cannot escape from capture.